

Webinar series on Hydro-diplomacy
18th September - 13th November 2020

Webinar series on HYDRO-DIPLOMACY



भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान गुवाहाटी
 INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI

Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IITG) is pleased to invite you to the webinar series on hydro-diplomacy.

The webinar will begin from 18th Sep 2020 and will continue until 13th Nov 2020, with a specific focus on a sub-theme during each session.

Moderator
 Prof. Anamika Barua
 Department of
 Humanities & Social Sciences
 IIT Guwahati

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Inception Webinar:

Fundamentals of Hydro-diplomacy
 Tariq Karim, Shyam Saran, 18th September
 Undala Alam, Mahendra P Lama 05:00 – 07:00 PM (IST)
 Nandita Baruah

Bonus lecture:

Water Security and Integrated Modelling Studies
 Roger A. Falconer 25th September
 T. G. Sitharam 05:00 – 06:30 PM (IST)

Webinar 1:

Power in water diplomacy
 Jeroen Warner 1st October
 Sumit Vij 05:00 – 06:30 PM (IST)

Webinar 2:

Communication and media in water diplomacy
 Emanuele Fantini 9th October
 Joydeep Gupta 05:00 – 06:30 PM (IST)

Webinar 3:

Gender and hydro-diplomacy
 Natasha Carmi 16th October
 Jenniver Sehring 05:00 – 06:30 PM (IST)

Webinar 4:

Transboundary Water Conflict and Cooperation
 Mark Zeitoun 21st October
 Selina Ho 05:00 – 06:30 pm (IST)

Webinar 5:

International water laws
 Christina Leb 30th October
 Lena Salame 06:30 – 08:00 PM (IST)

Webinar 6:

**Mediation, dispute resolution &
 conflict management in hydro-diplomacy**
 Aaron T. Wolf 6th November
 Zahi Shubber 06:30 – 08:00 PM (IST)

Bonus Lecture:

Water Scarcity to Security through Sustainable Solutions
 T.G. Sitharam 13th November
 Arup Kumar Sarma 03:00 pm – 4:30 PM (IST)



The webinar series on hydro diplomacy began from 18th September 2020 with a keynote address followed by an inception webinar on **Fundamentals of hydro-diplomacy**. **Prof. T. G. Sitharam**, Director, IIT Guwahati, delivered the keynote address and briefed about the dying Indian rivers and the impact generated due to water scarcity in our country. He emphasized on small reservoirs, like coastal reservoirs which can be used as a mechanism to store water and why it is a viable solution over dams. He also pointed out how this can also be used as a point of dialogue between India and Bangladesh, as both countries have a major coastline.

The inception webinar witnessed an esteemed group of panelists, who are established scholars in the field of water and diplomacy - **Ambassador (retd.) Shyam Saran, Dr. Undala Alam,**

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Inception webinar
Fundamentals of Hydro-diplomacy

18th September
5 PM to 7 PM IST

Welcome note:
Anandhaji Deka
Research Associate,
IIT Guwahati

Opening remarks:
T. G. Sitharam
Director, IIT Guwahati

Moderator:
Anamika Barua
Professor, IIT Guwahati

PANEL

Tariq Karim
Former Ambassador
Government of Bangladesh

Shyam Saran
Former Foreign Secretary
Government of India

Undala Alam
Energy Policy Adviser
Foreign Commonwealth
and Development Office
Government of UK

Mahendra P Lama
Professor
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Nandita Baruah
India Country Representative
The Asia Foundation

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Ambassador (retd.) Tariq Karim, Prof. Mahendra P Lama and Ms. Nandita Baruah. The panelists highlighted the need for viewing the river as a single and large ecological space in spite of the national boundaries instead of considering it as an asset that can be divided among nations. They also spoke about how no single economic theory or negotiation theory can fully explain the impact of hydro-diplomacy because when states come together, they do so with two concepts: national sovereignty and national power and diplomats are conditioned to embark on a zero sum game. They are there to consolidate, protect and preserve their sovereign rights.

The series of webinars followed by the inception webinar also brought experienced academics as speakers from across the globe to generate conversations on water, politics, power and diplomacy, along with a variable group of participants ranging from students, development professionals, researchers and academicians from across continents.

1. The bonus lecture on **Water Security and Integrated Modelling Studies** was organized on 25th September 2020. The speaker of the session was **Prof. Roger A. Falcon** and the session chair was **Prof. T.G. Sitharam**. The session highlighted how water security and diplomacy are crucially connected and a need for a holistic approach for managing water (whether inter-state or transboundary) should be emphasized. Modelling approaches for water management should also be socially inclusive for enhanced management.

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Bonus lecture:
Water security and integrated modelling studies

25th September
5 PM to 6:30 PM IST

Chair:
T. G. Sitharam
Director & Professor,
Department of Civil Engineering,
IIT Guwahati

Lecturer:
Roger A. Falconer
Emeritus Professor
School of Engineering
Cardiff University

Moderator:
Anamika Barua
Professor,
Department of Humanities
and Social Sciences,
IIT Guwahati

<https://rb.gy/ihoacf>
<https://rb.gy/baxikh>

The meeting link will be shared with the registered participants through separate email.

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Webinar series on HYDRO-DIPLOMACY

Webinar 1
Power in Water Diplomacy

1st October 2020
05:00 - 06:30 PM IST

Lecturer:
Jeroen Warner
Associate Professor
Sociology of Development
and Change Group
Wageningen University
and Research Centre (WUR)

Discussant:
Sumit Vij
Postdoctoral Researcher,
Faculty of Sciences,
Vrije University Amsterdam
Public Administration and Policy Group
Wageningen University and Research

Moderator:
Anamika Barua
Professor,
Department of Humanities
and Social Sciences,
IIT Guwahati

<https://rb.gy/ihoacf>
<https://rb.gy/baxikh>

The meeting link will be shared with the registered participants through separate email.

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2. The first webinar on **Power in Water Diplomacy** was organized on 1st October 2020. The speaker of the session was **Dr. Jeroen Warner** and the discussant was **Dr. Sumit Vij**. The session witnessed an engaging discussion on the literature available for current water diplomacy and how it is shy or reluctant to discuss power relations among the stakeholders. The speakers highlighted how rigorous and in-depth analysis is needed to explain and understand the role of power in water diplomacy and how it influences the water policy-making processes and outcomes.

3. The second webinar on **Communication and Media in Hydro Diplomacy** was organized on 9th October. The speaker of the session was **Dr. Emanuele Fantini** and the discussant was **Mr. Joydeep Gupta**. It emphasized on the need

to bring the voices of the community to the policy makers, and how media can play a significant role in doing the same. Hydro-diplomacy can be efficient only when there is support from the community as the cultural and emotional aspects, along with traditional knowledge, associated with the river should be included in the policies.

4. The third webinar on **Gender and Hydro-diplomacy** was organized on 16th October. The speaker of the session was *Ms. Natasha Carmi* and the discussant was *Dr. Jenniver Sehring*. It emphasized on empowerment and leadership of women in



water diplomacy decision making, historically dominated by men. It doesn't only mean participation alone but diversion from masculine ideas of dialogue and negotiation. Globally, gendered perspectives are still missing from the realm of hydro diplomacy-research, success stories, and even role models are limited due to lack of investigation.

5. The fourth webinar on **Transboundary Water Conflict and Cooperation** held on 21st October 2020. The speaker of the session was *Prof. Mark Zeitoun* and the discussant was *Dr. Selina Ho*. It



specified how conflict and cooperation are not at opposing ends, they often coexist. Subtle and covert forms of power often play an important role, for instance in case of many international water treaties, the less influential are often coerced into signing them. Transformative analysis aims to improve transboundary water arrangements by making them more



equitable and sustainable. While hydro-hegemony lead, they need followers too. The less powerful states therefore have the agency to shape interactions with the hydro-hegemon.

6. The fifth webinar on **International Water Laws** was organized on 30th October. The speaker of the session was *Dr. Christina Leb* and the discussant was *Ms. Léna Salamé*. It highlighted that there is no central enforcement authority for international law. Diplomacy and international law come into interaction only during the implementation and enforcement of international law. Therefore while negotiating water treaties, it is

important to keep in mind their scope of application. While treaties do give a frame of reference for rules (e.g. how the countries need to engage with each other, dispute resolution mechanisms), at the same time they can be inflexible and hence should be established as flexible mechanisms allowing adjustments over time.

7. The sixth webinar on **Mediation, dispute resolution & conflict management in hydro-diplomacy** was organised on 6th November. The speaker of the session was **Prof. Aaron T. Wolf** and the discussant was **Ms. Zaki Shubber**. It emphasized how conflict resolution is at the heart of international law. The UN charter states that it's members should settle disputes peacefully and should refer to different mechanisms that have been provided. There are a number of basins (like the Indus river basin) where there are existing tensions in spite of a basin agreement between the countries and requires renegotiation for shared water resources. Countries are also looking into the conflicting relationship between sharing water and security

issues associated with economic development. The speakers believe that drivers of conflict between the countries can also act as drivers of cooperation.

8. The final bonus lecture on **Water Scarcity to Security through Sustainable Solutions** on 13th November discussed innovative ideas to cope with water scarcity. The speaker of the session was **Prof. T.G. Sitharam** and the discussant and moderator was **Dr. Arup Kumar Sarma**. To calculate water stress and capacity it was suggested that its Availability, Quality and Accessibility should be taken into account. India's rainfall levels are high enough to not be water scarce, and conventional rainwater harvesting can be adopted. A Global risk perception survey conducted by the World Economic Forum reports that the highest level of societal impact over the next 10 years will be from the water crisis and hence Water-Food-Energy nexus is very crucial, with water being critical to it.

